

We claim:

1. A method of establishing a telecommunications group connection comprising the steps of:

responsive to the operation of an indicator, transmitting a request to a
5 telecommunications network to establish a duplex group connection among the members of a group identified in said message;

in a database, translating between the identification of the group and the identifications of the members of the group;

in said network, establishing connections between members of said group and
10 a media duplicator for receiving input signals from members of the group and for transmitting group output signals to members of the group.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said group connection is a voice group connection wherein members of the group can hear a plurality of other talking members.

15 3. The method of claim 1 wherein said group connection is a video group connection wherein members of the group can see a plurality of other members.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein a connection to a storage system is substituted for a connection to an absent member of the group.

20 5. The method of claim 1 wherein a connection to a pre-assigned alternate member is substituted for a connection to an absent member of the group.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein a leader of said group designates treatment of connections to absent members of said group.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said indicator is a soft button.

25 8. The method of claim 1 wherein said indicator is a telephone alphanumeric key.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

a specific member of said group signaling said media duplicator to request a half duplex connection from said specific member's station to other members of the group.

30 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting a request comprises the steps of:

transmitting said request to a server; and
transmitting a series of set-up requests from said server to said
telecommunications network.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein said group connection is a half duplex
5 connection.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein said group connection is a full duplex
connection.

13. Apparatus establishing a telecommunications group connection
comprising:

10 means, responsive to the operation of an indicator, for transmitting a request to
a telecommunications network to establish a group connection among the members of
a group identified in said message;

in a database, means for translating between the identification of the group and
the identifications of the members of the group;

15 in said network, means for establishing connections between members of said
group and a media duplicator for receiving input signals from members of the group
and for transmitting group output signals to members of the group.

14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said group connection is a voice group
connection wherein members of the group can hear a plurality of other talking
20 members.

15. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said group connection is a video group
connection wherein members of the group can see a plurality of other members.

16. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said indicator is a soft button.

17. The method of claim 13 wherein said indicator is a telephone
25 alphanumeric key.

18. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the means for transmitting a request
comprises:

means for transmitting said request to a server; and

30 means for transmitting a series of set-up requests from said server to said
telecommunications network.

19. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said group connection is a half duplex connection.

20. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said group connection is a full duplex connection.